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ABSTRACT

The fourth of six volumes in the "Elementary Principal Series," this booklet offers new principals a set of ideas, procedures, and examples associated with effective teacher supervision. The principal-teacher supervisory relationship has changed dramatically over recent years. The principal is no longer an inspector, but a colleague working with teachers to identify instructional problems, serve as a resource person, and assist in effecting change where appropriate. Although instructional supervision is a principal's most important responsibility, research indicates that building administrators spend less than 20 percent of their time in this endeavor. Principals' supervisory repsonsibilities include setting goals and objectives, deploying staff, observing teachers' instructional techniques, knowing the formal and informal curricula, overseeing special funded programs, maintaining staff morale, and managing staff development and teacher functions. The best instructional supervision approach is a five-step clinical supervision model featuring a preconference with the teacher, lesson observation, lesson analysis, the teacher conference, and the postconference analysis. When supervising instruction, the principal must consider cetain elements fundamental to the teaching/learning process: (1) student learning outcomes; (2) teaching behaviors; (3) teaching strategies; and (4) differing levels of teacher sophistication. Tips for managing time are provided, along with two appendices (a principal-peer evaluation form and a conference planning form) and a bibliography of 75 references. (MLH)

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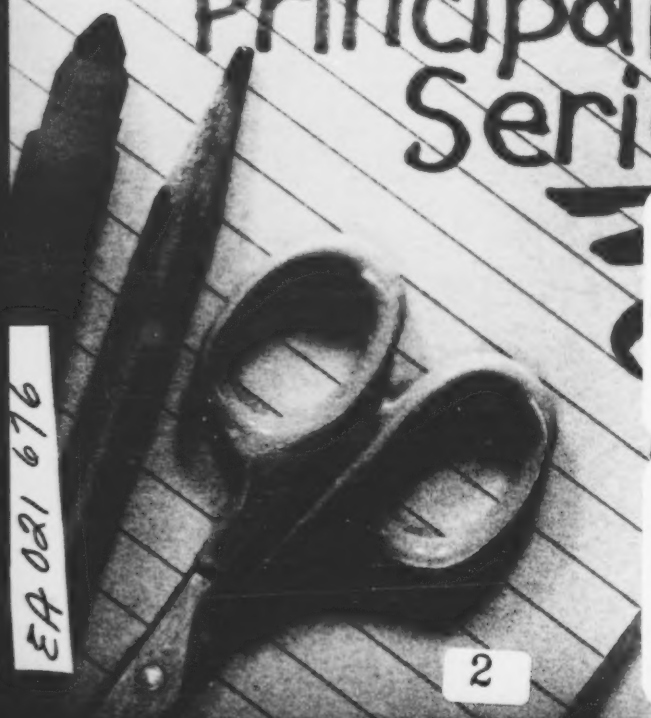
by Bill Luehe

Elementary Principal Series



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Elementary Principal Series No. 4

The Principal and Supervision

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Introduction

As a principal, you have one of the most challenging and, at the same time, most rewarding jobs in education. You can make a difference in the effectiveness of your teachers, who in turn can make a difference in the learning outcomes of their students. Meeting this challenge requires that you be prepared to do a first-rate job of supervision. The purpose of this booklet is to offer the principal, particularly the new principal, a set of ideas, procedures, and examples for effective teacher supervision.

The principal-teacher supervisory relationship has changed dramatically over recent years. Historically, the relationship was quite formal. The purpose of supervision was essentially to inspect teachers and their teaching. In another era supervisors were even called inspectors. This term is still used in some countries. Typically, principals observed in the classroom and told teachers what was right or wrong with their lessons; teachers were expected to accept such evaluations without question. The role of supervisors was to weed out weak teachers and to see that the standards of the school's governing body were upheld.

As the principalship evolved into a full-time position around the turn of the century, the focus of supervision shifted to administrative and managerial tasks – all those things necessary to make a school run smoothly. By the middle of this century, accountability became an important issue, and much of the supervision was centered on monitoring test results and meeting standards. This resulted in attempts to control teacher behavior in order to improve student performance. This emphasis is still prevalent today.

Gradually human relations entered the supervisory process, resulting in a collegial relationship between the principal and the teacher.

The relationship has become one of interacting and exchanging ideas. The principal is no longer an inspector but one whose role is to work with teachers to identify instructional problems, to serve as a resource person, and to assist in bringing about change where it is appropriate.

In today's supervisory setting, lessons are analyzed by the principal and the teacher together to determine strengths and weaknesses. This approach has been found to be much more effective in bringing about changes in both teacher behaviors and student learning. This collaborative approach will be the focus of much of this booklet.

Supervision of instruction is the most important responsibility of the principal. Yet research indicates that principals as a group typically spend about 20% of their time in this endeavor and 80% of their time on other matters. However, if we look at the research on effective schools, we find that principals in these schools spend a minimum of 50% of their time on instructional supervision. The payoff is obvious. If you want an effective school, you will need to devote a major part of your time to the supervision of instruction.

As a principal, you are ultimately responsible for the quality of education every student in your school receives. But since you can not personally teach each student, your role is to assist those who are directly responsible for instruction. In order to do that, you have to get into classrooms on a regular basis. It is only through classroom observations that you become and remain informed about how much learning is going on in each classroom and how effective each of your teachers is.

Your staff need to know that you place great importance on good teaching. They also need to know that you accept the role of the instructional leader of the school and will serve as a coach and resource for them. Let them know that you will be observing in their classrooms frequently and that you will be giving them feedback regarding the effectiveness of their teaching. They also should be aware that their teaching effectiveness will be determined in large part by the amount of student learning that takes place. If you set high expectations for yourself as supervisor and model those expectations for the staff, they in turn will set high expectations for themselves and their students.

As you gain more information about the quality of instruction in your school, you will begin to make plans for improvement wherever it is necessary. Probably most of your staff are doing a great job with instruction. Your supervision of these teachers will be less

frequent than with those who need your assistance. Nevertheless, do not neglect your good teachers or take them for granted. Pop into their classrooms, even if only for a short visit, to make sure that all is going smoothly. And do not forget to give them some sort of feedback (written or oral). Everyone appreciates being told he is doing a great job. Also remember that these highly effective teachers can help you as you work with your less experienced teachers.

In order to fulfill your supervisory role, you will need to give careful thought to your own professional growth. As more and more is learned about the teaching/learning process, you will need to stay abreast of the research. As the instructional leader in your school, your staff will look to you for help in implementing new teaching techniques in their classrooms. As you fulfill your supervisory responsibilities, you will be richly rewarded with high staff morale, with increased learning by students, and with recognition from professional colleagues and the community.

Supervisory Functions of the Principal

As a principal, you have the responsibility of supervising a multitude of activities, processes, and outcomes. The supervision of instruction is primary, but there are many other areas that you are responsible for supervising. Let's take a brief look at some of these areas.

Setting Goals and Objectives. High on your list of supervisory responsibilities should be the setting of goals and objectives for your school. This helps to establish the direction for accomplishing those things that you and your staff deem important. I am aware of many instances where principals have set goals without the involvement of their staffs and then have been disappointed when the goals were not achieved. Of course, you also will have goals and objectives set for you by your school board or the state department of education. Or perhaps the superintendent will set some districtwide goals for you and your staff to accomplish.

Once your goals and objectives are identified, they must be communicated to everyone involved in carrying them out. This creates a unity of purpose, with everyone pulling in the same direction. You must see that time, effort, and resources are allocated for accomplishing the goals. Integral to the goal-setting process is planning for evaluation. Once evaluation is complete, you must then interpret the results and determine what further action, if any, is necessary.

Staff Utilization. Proper utilization of your staff will be a critical supervisory function as you work to obtain the best possible instructional program at your school. I have frequently heard principals say, "If it weren't for teacher X, we would have a great math department" or "If it weren't for teacher Y, we would have an outstanding third-grade team." In many instances, the teacher in question has not been

appropriately assigned. Reassigning teachers can be as easy as asking them to consider another assignment where they will be more successful, or it can be an adversarial process requiring you to invoke the involuntary transfer procedures specified in the teacher union contract. Needless to say, if placement of staff is done with established goals and objectives in mind, much time and tension can be saved down the line.

Another aspect of staff utilization, one that is closely related to the supervisory function, is identifying and selecting those teachers who can take on such important tasks as serving on or chairing a textbook selection committee, working on a curriculum development project, or leading a staff development workshop.

Instructional Techniques. As a principal, you ultimately are responsible for student learning at your school. The surest way to ensure high quality instruction is to visit classrooms and observe teachers' instructional techniques. When observing, you will want to pay particular attention to how much students are learning in each lesson, and to the particular strategies the teacher is using to bring about learning. In situations where the strategies used are not effective for student learning, you will have to suggest ways in which the teacher can improve.

Helping a teacher to improve may be as simple as suggesting a technique that is more appropriate for the type of lesson that is being taught. For example, if you observed a teacher teaching the whole class a math lesson that requires specific entry-level skills that all the students do not possess, then you might suggest that the teacher consider using skill-based grouping rather than teaching to the whole class.

In helping a teacher to use a more appropriate instructional technique, you might use such questions as:

1. What is the specific concept or skill you want the students to know or to be able to use by the end of the lesson?
2. What do the students bring to the lesson in the way of existing skills, background, or experiences?
3. Have you thought about other ways of explaining a concept or teaching a skill than the one you are using?
4. What other kinds of materials or equipment do you need that might help you in teaching this lesson?

As instructional supervisor, your role is to see that the techniques used are ones that result in consistent student learning.

Curriculum. Another important element of supervision is being knowledgeable about the curriculum that students are expected to learn. In most schools there is both a formal and informal curriculum. The formal curriculum is what is mandated by the local board of education or the state department of education. It usually comes in the form of elaborate curriculum guides with scope and sequence charts and a long list of resources. The informal curriculum is what individual teachers bring into the classroom.

In your supervisory role, you have the responsibility to see that the formal curriculum is being taught. But you have a further responsibility of monitoring the formal curriculum to see if it is accomplishing what it purports to do. You will discover whether the curriculum is sound as you get into classrooms and observe teaching and learning. You also want to listen carefully to what your teachers have to say about the curriculum. Another way to assess the soundness of the curriculum is to monitor students' test scores. Scores that show reasonable growth are usually indicators of an appropriate curriculum. However, if student test scores show a consistent decline, then a look at your curriculum is in order.

Not long ago, a high school principal complained to me that his juniors had scored low on the math section of the PSAT. When I asked him what type of curriculum was being offered at the sophomore and junior levels, he reported that the math department had revamped the curriculum two years ago, which programmed the more capable math students into an accelerated math track that collapsed two math courses into one. With further study, it became apparent that the new math curriculum did not provide enough practice examples or allow enough time on each math concept to give students a thorough grasp of the content. Consequently, they did poorly on the test.

The informal curriculum that teachers bring to the classroom often serves as a useful supplement to the formal curriculum. For example, a teacher who has just finished a physical science unit on the structure and composition of the Earth (a part of the formal curriculum) might do a follow-up unit on rocks and minerals (not part of the formal curriculum but content in which the teacher has both interest and expertise). In your supervisory role, you must see that the informal curriculum does not replace the formal curriculum. When this happens (and it frequently does), it can jeopardize the logical flow or sequence of learning.

I once served on a junior high school staff with a U.S. history teacher who was enamored with the Civil War. She loved this period of history and was quite knowledgeable about it. The year's course was supposed to cover U.S. history from the Colonial period to contemporary times. What the students got was one quarter of Colonial history, two quarters of Civil War history, and a rush job the last quarter bringing them up to modern times. Her students were steeped in knowledge about the Civil War but grossly uninformed about the period from the Civil War to the present. In supervising a situation such as this, the teacher should be held accountable for balanced coverage of the formal curriculum but at the same time should not be discouraged from showing enthusiasm for her favorite period of U.S. history.

Of course, there are times when the informal curriculum can get a teacher, or for that matter, the principal, the superintendent, and the board of education, into hot water. This happens when a teacher digresses from the formal curriculum and offers personal views about such sensitive areas as sexuality, religion, and politics.

Special Funded Programs. Most schools today operate a variety of special programs funded by state or federal grants. Even if these programs are administered out of the central office, you will have responsibility for supervising them in your school. In addition to supervising the special program staff, you must see that the programs are carried out in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations. Although these special programs add to your supervisory responsibilities, they provide valuable services to special needs students. They are a vital part of the school's total instructional program. Without careful supervision, special funded programs can become islands within a school, isolated from the regular program. When this happens, funded programs can, and have, become counterproductive to the goals and objectives that you and your staff have set. It therefore behooves you to take a vital interest in these programs, to become knowledgeable about them, and to supervise them closely.

Staff Morale. What is accomplished in a school results from the dedication, commitment, and skill of the staff. For the staff to work effectively, high morale must permeate the school climate. A principal has a major role in creating and maintaining high staff morale. Here are some of the things you can do to keep morale high at your school.

Show that you care. Take a personal interest in each of your staff. This does not mean that you have to be a confidant to each of them. It does mean that you are available if there is something they need to discuss with you. It means that you give them a pat on the back when they have accomplished something special; and you share the accomplishment with other staff if appropriate. If a staff member is discouraged or facing a tough personal problem, let them know that you are sympathetic. In short, always treat your staff members in a caring, dignified, and humane manner.

Be open and honest. Level with your co-workers. There may be times when you are asked questions that you cannot answer. Admit it and promise to get back with the answer. There will be times when you are asked questions you cannot answer and it is not appropriate for you to use your time to find the answer. Simply state this to the staff member. There will also be occasions when you will be asked a question that is of a confidential nature and you cannot share the answer. You need to let your colleague know that. They will understand and respect you for treating information in a professional way. By doing so, you are sending them a signal that they can expect the same sort of treatment. Sometimes new principals feel that they must be all-knowing. In trying to be such, they lose credibility with staff.

Be supportive. Your staff should feel that they can rely on you to support them in situations where your support is merited. You will undoubtedly face some tough decisions in this area. Your co-workers need to know that in situations where they have acted prudently and professionally, your support will always be there. But in instances where they have made a judgment error or have behaved unprofessionally, this must be pointed out to them. Then your role is to help them solve the problem. Frequent observation in classrooms will alert you to potential problems. Thus when a parent calls to complain that teacher X gives too much homework or has poor classroom discipline, you can respond quickly with an accurate assessment of the situation.

There are many ways to show support for your staff. Allowing them to be creative in their teaching is one way. Encouraging creative approaches enhances the instructional program. Providing staff with the necessary resources for their teaching is another way. So is letting each staff member know that he or she is an important part of the school team.

Be firm, fair, and consistent. Being firm with your staff means reminding them that they are entrusted with certain responsibilities (getting to playground duty on time, attending faculty meetings, conferencing with parents, etc.) and that you expect them to carry out those responsibilities.

Being fair with your staff means simply that you are just, impartial, and unprejudiced. Nothing erodes staff morale more than the feeling that a principal is unfair or plays favorites. A veteran teacher confided to me that she was becoming frustrated because her principal was giving a small clique of teachers special favors while ignoring the rest of the staff. This situation had been building for several months. When approached by some of the disgruntled teachers, the principal denied that the condition existed. Subsequently, I heard that several teachers had made requests for transfers and that the principal's performance review was in trouble.

Closely related to being fair is being consistent. Any time that you treat your staff in an inconsistent fashion, morale problems are likely to result. Being consistent builds confidence in you and helps to maintain high staff morale.

Make decisions collaboratively. One of the best ways to establish and maintain high morale is to use a participative or collaborative decision-making process, especially with decisions that directly affect the staff. With participation comes a feeling of ownership for the decision and a commitment to make the decision work. Not all decisions that a principal has to make lend themselves to collaborative decision making, but give particular attention to those dealing with the work environment of your school.

Do some nice things. A lot of little things can help to promote staff morale. Bring some "goodies" for the staff to enjoy at break time. Offer to take playground duty periodically. Your staff will love you for it, and it will give you an opportunity to see what is going on on the playground or in the restrooms. Remember staff birthdays with a card. Bring some flowers from your garden to brighten up the staff lounge. People appreciate thoughtful things that are done for them. This appreciation translates into job satisfaction and high morale.

Maintain the physical plant. The school plant says a lot about you as the principal. In fact, for many people in the community, their first impression of a school is its physical appearance. If the grounds are neat and well groomed and the building well maintained, it con-

veys the impression that the school is well run. Also, an attractive physical plant is a source of pride for staff and students alike. In order to maintain your school and grounds, there may be times when you need to fight for the resources to keep your school in top-notch condition. Just remember that an attractive physical plant is probably the single greatest factor in developing a positive image for your school.

Staff Development. Continuing staff development is the foundation for instructional improvement. Good staff development does not just happen; you have to plan for it. You need to continually assess the strengths and weaknesses of your staff. As much as possible, you want to tailor the staff development programs to your teachers' expressed needs. In addition, staff development may be needed to carry out a new district or state curriculum. For example, if the district wants to implement a new elementary art curriculum, teachers who are not art specialists might need staff development in specific art techniques that will be used in the new curriculum.

Teacher Evaluation. Staff evaluation is a principal's primary responsibility. It usually takes some time for a new principal to become comfortable with this important responsibility. The best preparation for evaluation is frequent classroom observations. To do less is unfair to the teacher and could jeopardize your credibility. Each of your observations should be followed up in a timely manner with a teacher conference. When writing up your summary evaluation, make sure you base your comments on what you observed during the classroom visits.

You also want to be sure to adhere to the district's time lines for turning in your evaluations. Do not procrastinate and end up doing all your summary evaluations at the last minute. You will feel much better if you schedule your evaluations throughout the school year, thus giving yourself the necessary time to carry out one of your most important professional functions.

The other side of staff evaluation is your own personal evaluation. Although your district may have a formal evaluation program for administrators, I would urge you to consider some sort of evaluation feedback from your staff. Certainly peer evaluation can be a little risky. Your staff may tell you some things that you do not want to hear. Your personal perception about how well you are doing may, or may not, be an accurate perception. With feedback from your colleagues, you can easily determine what are perceived as your strengths

and weaknesses. Your staff will appreciate the opportunity to give you feedback regarding their perceptions of your effectiveness. You in turn can use the information to become a better principal. The Appendix includes a Principal-Peer Evaluation form that you may find helpful.

The Clinical Supervision Model

In the previous chapter several different facets of your supervisory responsibilities were discussed. In this chapter the focus is on the supervision of instruction. There are several instructional supervision models that principals can use. My recommendation is a model that uses a collaborative approach, specifically a modification of the clinical supervision model.

Clinical supervision is a collegial model that has gained national and international prominence. Developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Robert Goldhammer, Robert Anderson, and Morris Cogan, the model was used originally for supervising student teachers. Since that time, the model has been applied to the general supervision of teachers in classrooms across the country and in many foreign nations as well. One of the critical elements of the model is the collaborative relationship it fosters between the principal and the teacher for the purpose of instructional improvement.

The clinical supervision model, as described here, has undergone some slight modifications as a result of experience gained in the real world of the school and classroom. The model consists of five steps or stages, with each step intended to assist both the principal and teacher in taking a close look at the teaching/learning process, determining the strengths and weaknesses of a lesson, and then identifying steps that will assist the teacher in future lessons. The last step in the model is a check-up to determine whether the principal has done an effective job. Let's take a look at each of the five steps of the model.

Step 1. Pre-Conference with the Teacher

If this is the first pre-conference, it may be necessary to go over the steps in the clinical supervision model. It is important that the teacher understands the purpose of each step. Taking time to explain the model helps to remove any anxiety the teacher may feel about the process. And it can be a time for building rapport. Assure the teacher that the process is one that will allow the two of you to work together to improve instruction. Be sure to let the teacher know that you will be taking notes during your observation in order to have an accurate record when giving feedback about the lesson. If possible, the pre-conference should take place in the familiar surroundings of the teacher's own classroom.

The central task of the pre-conference is for the teacher to select the specific skill, technique, or approach in the lesson that he would like you to observe. If the teacher has difficulty formulating a specific objective for the observation, help him to think through what he wants students to accomplish as a result of the lesson. Out of this discussion will come some specific items that will become the focus for the observation.

Other matters to be covered in the pre-conference are scheduling the time of the observation and selecting the class or subject the teacher would like you to observe. Also, at this time you can schedule the post-observation conference. If possible, the post-conference should occur within 24 hours after the observation, when details of the lesson are still fresh in your mind and the teacher's. If you think your presence in the classroom may be distracting to the students, ask the teacher to alert them that the principal will be visiting the classroom. As clinical supervision visits become routine, the students will soon become oblivious to a visitor in the classroom.

When first implementing clinical supervision, you can save time by covering some of the items of the pre-conference with groups of teachers. For example, you may elect to work with all of your second-grade teachers or all math teachers in a departmentalized school. In the group setting, you can discuss the essential elements of the pre-conference, the importance of having a specific objective for the observation, and perhaps set up a schedule for the first round of observations.

After teachers become accustomed to the clinical supervision model, it may not be necessary to hold a formal pre-conference before each observation. A brief chat in the teachers' lounge or a memo from

the teacher may be all that is necessary to set the agenda for the observation.

Step 2. The Lesson Observation

During this step, you will be taking notes. It is a good idea to have your note pad or observation form ready as you go into the classroom with the teacher's name, date, and time written at the top. Be sure to be on time. Few things infuriate a teacher more than to have to wait for the principal to show up for a scheduled lesson observation. It is important to observe a full lesson. This means that you must be there before the lesson starts and remain until the end of the lesson. Unless you observe a complete lesson, you cannot provide the feedback and analysis the teacher expects and needs.

The physical position you take in the classroom should allow you to see and hear the teacher-student exchange. Usually a spot midway along the perimeter of the room will allow you to see at least half the student's faces, to observe the teacher's actions, and to hear the teacher-student interaction. If you are observing a small-group lesson, such as students in a reading circle or a lab lesson, get as close as you can without being a distraction to the teacher and students.

Make your notes as complete as possible, and keep your focus on the interactions between the teacher and students. Record interactions verbatim as much as you can. This allows you to build an accurate and unbiased record of the lesson. If there are student handouts for the lesson, get copies for yourself. The more accurate and complete your notes, the better your analysis of the lesson can be when you meet with the teacher for the post-observation conference.

Step 3. Analysis of the Lesson

The lesson analysis is a critical step in the clinical supervision process. The analysis of most lessons is likely to yield two objectives for the post-observation conference with the teacher: a "growth" objective and a "reinforcement" objective. Using your notes and other information collected during the observation, you can begin your analysis by asking:

1. What was the objective of the lesson?
2. Was the objective appropriate?
3. Was the objective achieved?

In most lessons you observe, the answer to the above questions will be affirmative. However, on occasion you will observe a lesson where the teacher's objective was not clear or where there were too many objectives. Or the objective may have been clear, but it was too difficult or too easy for the students. Or the objective may have been appropriate, but the students did not learn or achieve the objective. In such instances, you and the teacher will want to talk about the reasons why the lesson was not completely successful. Out of this discussion will come the "growth" objective for your conference with the teacher. In those lessons where the response is affirmative to the three questions, further analysis might indicate that not all the students internalized the learning objective. In this case, determining why will be the "growth" objective for the teacher conference.

You also will observe lessons that have a clear objective, that are appropriate for the students, and that result in a high degree of learning by all the students. In such cases, the lesson is clearly a good one and the teacher should be told so. In these instances you will not have a "growth" objective for the conference with the teacher.

As you analyze the lesson (see the Appendix for a sample Lesson Analysis and Conference Planning Form), you will identify many teacher behaviors that contributed to student learning. From these behaviors, you will choose one to become your "reinforcement" objective for the conference.

In establishing both the "growth" and the "reinforcement" objectives for your conference, there is a temptation to tell the teacher about all of the shortcomings in the lesson as well as all of the good things that happened. Avoid this. Instead select one or two relevant items (supported by your notes) and focus on these as your conference objectives. In doing this you are following sound teaching/learning principles and presenting a positive model for teachers to emulate in their own teaching.

Step 4. The Teacher Conference

In this step in the clinical supervision model, you discuss and give feedback to the teacher about the lesson. You can think of the conference as your "lesson" with its own set of objectives. The conference might take place in your office, but the teacher is likely to be more relaxed if it occurs in the classroom. If it is the teacher's first conference, you may want to keep the focus on positive feedback. This allows the teacher to become comfortable with the process and

helps to build your credibility relative to identifying specific teacher behaviors and student learning in the lesson.

As mentioned earlier, you typically will have two objectives for the conference: one for "growth" and one for "reinforcement." This is a variation of the original clinical supervision model, which called for only the "growth" objective. In my early experience with clinical supervision, I found that teachers, although pleased to be working with the model, wondered why they were never given credit for the good things that went on during the lesson. Their point was well taken. Subsequently, I added the "reinforcement" objective to the conference process.

At the beginning of the conference, ask the teacher the three questions that you used in your initial analysis of the lesson relative to the clarity of the objective, its appropriateness, and whether or not it was achieved. It is important that you get the teacher's responses to these three questions. In the vast majority of instances, the teacher will confirm your analysis. When this does not happen, you need to explore the reasons why. Your observation notes will be helpful here as well as at other times during the conference when you want to make a point.

If you have identified a "growth" objective as a result of your lesson analysis, you will need to discuss it in some depth with the teacher. One of the many strengths of the clinical supervision process is that it can lead to a behavior change. For example, if the failure of some of the students to achieve the learning objective could be attributed to the lack of enough guided practice, you will want to address this shortcoming and explore what could be done to prevent it in future lessons. Then you and the teacher can discuss ways of providing for more guided practice.

As you conclude the conference, you may want to set a specific date and time to return for another observation or simply agree that you will be back in the classroom within the next week or so. In planning for follow-up, make sure the teacher has enough time to put the agreed-on strategy into practice. Encourage the teacher to let you know if any problems arise in implementing the strategy and assure the teacher that you are there to help.

Step 5. Post-Conference Analysis

This final step in the clinical supervision process provides for both validation and accountability on your part. It allows you to critique

the quality of your supervision. If in your conference you identified two objectives and worked to accomplish them, you now need to check to see if those objectives were appropriate for the teacher and whether or not you reached them. The easiest way to do this is to ask the teacher at the end of the conference to identify your "growth" objective. If the teacher responds that it was that the students did not learn as much as was anticipated because of insufficient guided practice, you have confirmation that your "growth" objective was communicated. On the other hand, if the teacher replies that you covered so many things in the conference that he is not sure what your "growth" objective was, then you know that you need to do some reteaching. The same process holds true for your "reinforcement" objective.

The post-conference analysis can have a positive effect on your supervisory relationship with the teacher in that it offers evidence that you are holding yourself responsible for effective supervision, just as you expect your staff to be responsible for improving their instructional techniques.

What to Look for When Supervising Instruction

When supervising instruction, you need to look for certain elements that are fundamental to the teaching/learning process. These are student learning outcomes, teacher behaviors, and teaching strategies. Let us look at each of these elements as they relate to your role as supervisor.

Student Learning Outcomes

The bottom line in what we do in schools is student learning, and rightfully so. This element should be foremost in your mind as you observe in classrooms and work with teachers. We can look at student learning from two perspectives: long-range learning and lesson-by-lesson learning.

In working with your staff on long-range learning, you will be dealing with broad goals and objectives of the curriculum – the concepts, skills, and processes that you want all students to learn. Even as you observe individual lessons devoted to a single skill or concept, you and the teacher need to see it in the context of long-range learning goals. You and your staff will need to devise an assessment program to determine whether students are achieving the expected long-range learning outcomes. As you get evaluation data, you will need to make decisions about what modifications, if any, are needed to improve learning. Once you have done this, the cycle begins again.

Lesson-by-lesson learning is cumulative and leads to long-range goals. Students must be successful day by day if they are to achieve the long-range goals. Your supervision role will have its greatest impact in the lesson-by-lesson learning. As you get into classrooms and observe lessons, you must be particularly alert to the amount of learn-

ing that occurs. Do the students have the readiness or entry-level skills to deal with the new content the teacher is presenting? As the lesson progresses, are all the students actively involved? At the end of the lesson, did the students achieve the lesson objective? If not all of them, how many? What did the teacher do with those who did not achieve the lesson objective? You will need to address these questions when you give the teacher feedback after your observation.

Assessing the amount of student learning that occurs requires that you observe student behavior and response. This may be demonstrated by the student/teacher dialogue or interaction, by how students respond to questions, or by the questions they ask. Or if students are carrying out an assignment or paper-and-pencil exercise, you can get a sense of how much the students are learning by walking around the classroom and observing their work. Monitoring student learning, both long-range and lesson-by-lesson, will give you the data needed to carry out your supervision responsibilities.

Teaching Behaviors

Teachers control the learning atmosphere in their classrooms. What they do or do not do affects the quality of learning that goes on. Considerable research on teacher behavior exists that tells us what effective teachers do to promote learning. In your supervisory role, you must have a solid understanding of this research and be able to translate it to the classroom practitioner.

Following are some teacher behaviors that researchers say are correlated with effective learning. Teachers:

- Find out what students already knew before in order to determine what they should learn next.
- Build lesson objectives based on student learning needs.
- Provide a review activity to relate the lesson objective and previous learning.
- Tell students what they will learn by the end of the lesson.
- Present new information in a clear manner.
- Show students what the learning outcome will be when it is correctly done.
- Check periodically during the lesson to make sure that all students are learning.
- Assist students as they practice the new learning to minimize the number of errors.

- Assess each student's learning at the end of the lesson.
- Reteach those students who have not achieved the lesson objective.
- Provide independent practice for those students who have achieved the lesson objective.

You should not expect to see all these behaviors during the course of a single lesson. However, effective teachers demonstrate a number of behaviors consistently, for example, having a clear objective for their lesson, providing practice, and assessing the amount or quality of learning at the end of the lesson. Again, the botton line in determining a good lesson is how much students have learned and what the teacher did to bring about that learning.

Teaching Strategies

Teachers use different teaching strategies to achieve different lesson objectives. Of course, for some lessons teachers use several strategies simultaneously. In supervising, sometimes you will find that teachers need help in matching a strategy that is most appropriate for achieving the lesson objective. When the lesson objective is acquisition of facts or skills, a mastery learning strategy probably would be the most appropriate. If the objective is developing logical thinking and problem-solving processes, then an inquiry strategy would be appropriate. If the objective is to get students to work together on a task, then a cooperative learning strategy would be in order. If the objective is to foster creativity, then brainstorming or mind-mapping might be the preferred strategy.

Supervision is a complex act. But by keeping your focus on student learning, teacher behaviors, and teaching strategies, you will be able to improve the quality of instruction in your school.

Supervising Teachers at Different Levels of Sophistication

As you become acquainted with your staff and observe in their classrooms, you likely will find that their teaching reflects different levels of sophistication. Some will be "thoroughbreds" and all you need to do is to encourage them to continue their outstanding work. Others with less experience may exhibit strong potential but need help with certain skills or teaching strategies. Still others (hopefully only a few) might best be described as "tired." They put in their time, maintain some semblance of order, and collect their paycheck at the

end of the month. It goes without saying that you will have to vary your supervision approach when dealing with the various levels of teaching sophistication and with different attitudinal stances.

For example, you may be working with a primary teacher who has a good grasp of the skills for teaching beginning reading but is lackluster in teaching her young charges. Because of her lack of enthusiasm, the children become bored and disinterested. More than likely, no one has given this teacher any feedback about this aspect of her teaching. When supervising her, you might begin with some positive comments about the systematic way she teaches basic reading skills and then offer to teach a sample lesson to one of her reading groups. By showing enthusiasm and engaging the children actively in the lesson, you can model the kinds of teacher behavior you would like the teacher to display.

Or you may have a new teacher on your staff who is resistant to your supervision. More than likely this resistance is based on a lack of understanding of the clinical supervision process. In such cases it will be necessary to explain carefully the steps in the process. By assuring the teacher that you are there to assist, you can go a long way in overcoming the resistance.

By knowing the skill levels and attitudes of your teachers, you can develop a supervision plan that is appropriate for them. However, keep in mind that no plan is foolproof. You may have to modify your plan along the way to meet the individual needs of teachers as they change or as you gain more information about them.

Making Time to Supervise

Time is a perennial problem for principals. There never seems to be enough of it! Someone once said that time is high in demand but short in supply. Most principals admit that they are not satisfied with the way they use their time. You frequently hear, "I just don't have enough time to get it all done," or "I'm just too busy to take on another responsibility." Finding time to carry out your supervision responsibilities calls for a careful assessment of how you currently use your time.

Many things intrude on a principal's time, including handling paperwork, attending meetings, taking telephone calls from parents or colleagues, sorting through junk mail, greeting unscheduled visitors, and other sundry interruptions. Time also is consumed because of lack of planning, indecision, unclear communications, and failure to delegate. If you are having time-management problems, talk to some experienced principals in your district about how they manage their time. You also might want to sign up for a time-management workshop when one is offered.

Tips for Managing Your Time

There are a number of things that you can do to maximize your time. Here are a few ideas that other principals have shared with me:

1. Develop a system for planning your time. Without some sort of system, your use of time will be a hit-or-miss proposition. Use such tools as a daily planner pad, a deadline reminder sheet, a tickler file, and a priority list. A priority list will help to keep you on track by doing the most important things first. Time-management experts say that the tasks at the top of a priority list should be those that are the most

difficult or uncomfortable to do. As you check off each task completed on the priority list, you will feel a sense of accomplishment.

2. Take time to plan. It takes time to save time. Taking time to plan is one of the first things that you should do each day. Put first things first. Use a planning schedule for each day, for each week, for each month, and a long-range plan for the year. Keep an abbreviated version of the planning schedule in a pocket calendar that you can carry with you. Part of your plan should be simply time to think. You need time to think before you can act. Most problems arise from action without thought. Planning takes time, but it is time well invested.

3. Use your secretary to help mangage your time. A good secretary can be a principal's greatest asset in running a school. Treat your secretary as a partner and encourage her to advise you at any time regarding matters of office operations. Meet with your secretary at the beginning of each day to go over your schedule and to establish priorities. Have her keep a planning calendar similar to yours. Delegate her to handle as many details as possible: managing the office files, screening and routing telephone calls, responding to routine inquiries, making appointments for you and reminding you of them, and proofreading all communications going out of the office, to name a few. Make your secretary a member of your administrative team and invite her to participate in appropriate inservice programs.

4. Do not overschedule your day. It is rare for a principal not to have at least one emergency during a typical school day. Anticipate emergencies and build time into your schedule to respond to them. On days when you are fortunate not to have an emergency occur, you can use the time for tasks you have been putting off.

5. Have a plan for handling unscheduled visitors. Even though you may believe in an "open door" policy, you will have to put some limits on your availability. Having a policy of operating by appointment allows you to see more people, and you won't disappoint those who couldn't see you because you were tied up when they "dropped in." Also, there are times when you will need to close your office door and work uninterrupted – except for real emergencies.

Make your staff realize that there is a time for business and a time for socializing. Use your break times in the teachers' lounge and the lunch hour to do your socializing. Sometimes when you need to conduct business with staff, it is better to go to their classroom or office than to invite them to come to your office. This not only gets you

out of your office but allows you to control the amount of time you spend together. You can simply excuse yourself and leave when you have used up the time you scheduled for the visit. You also can hasten your visit by remaining standing.

Your secretary can play a key role in handling unscheduled visitors. First, her desk should be located so that she can screen all visitors coming to your office. Then she should be trained to ask diplomatically a series of questions to determine whether it is really necessary for the visitor see you. If the visitor insists on seeing you, you can make it brief by meeting just outside of your office or by having your secretary interrupt you with an "important" phone call.

6. Set up procedures for handling phone calls. You cannot control the number of phone calls that come into your office, but you can control how they are handled. For example, when you are in a conference, you may instruct your secretary to interrupt you only for calls that you get from your family, the superintendent, or a board member. For other calls, your secretary can take the name and number and say that you will get back to them as soon as you can. If your secretary makes a few inquiries, she can handle many calls herself or direct them to the appropriate staff member. Many experienced principals set aside time at the end of the day to return calls. This way there are fewer interruptions and you can give your full attention to the caller. Before you make calls, organize your thoughts by writing down key items that you need to cover so nothing will be forgotten. It also expedites matters if you pull the folder on the topic that you want to discuss in case specific information is needed during the course of your conversation.

7. Develop a plan for handling your mail. One of a principal's biggest time robbers is managing the flow of mail into the office. Work with your secretary to develop a system that works for you. Give her some guidelines for determining what mail you need to see, what she can handle herself, and what she should route to others. Ask her to sort your mail into three folders: one for things that must be dealt with immediately, one for things that are important but do not require your immediate attention, and one for informational reading material that you can get to later. Keep your paperwork moving. Seeing it pile up on your desk can be dispiriting – and you are likely to lose something or spend valuable time trying to find it.

8. Do not be afraid to delegate. I have already mentioned delegating to your secretary. But there are many tasks involved in running

a school that can be delegated to either professional or classified staff. There is an old rule that says if someone else can do it, you shouldn't. Remember, by delegating, you provide your staff the opportunity to broaden their experience.

9. Be prepared for your meetings – the ones that you schedule as well as the ones that you must attend. Have the pertinent information that you need at your fingertips. Do not allow a meeting to be held up while you or someone else has to get information that is necessary for the discussion. Make sure that your handouts are ready and that you have enough. It is helpful to announce at the start of a meeting what the time parameters are. Knowing this, the group will help you to move things along.

10. Use your "down" time profitably. Periodically you will find that you have unscheduled time. This can occur while you are in the barber/beauty shop, waiting for a dental appointment, or in an airport between flights. With a little forethought and planning, you can turn this into productive time. For example, you can take your informational reading folder to the dentist's office or catch up on your educational research reading while on the plane or waiting at the terminal. Use a portable tape recorder to dictate memos or correspondence during slack times. In fact, using a tape recorder for all of your correspondence can eliminate handwritten first drafts and give you faster turn-around time for your communications.

As you can see, there are many ways to manage your time on routine matters and thus give you more time for instructional supervision. But don't get caught in the trap of believing that if you simply work harder all of your work will get done. What you want to do is work smarter, not harder. Effectively managing your time is working smarter.

Conclusion

As principal, you have many supervisory roles, the most important being supervision of instruction. Although your responsibilities are many, your reward is knowing that as instructional leader in your school, you are providing students a good education as a result of your supervisory efforts with your teachers. In the brief space of this booklet, I have been able to provide only an overview of the supervisory process. You can learn more by consulting the references in the bibliography. Good luck!

Appendix
Principal-Peer Evaluation Form

Name _____
Peer Evaluator _____ (Optional)
Date _____
Please complete and return to the office by (date). Be as specific as possible.

1. What do I do well?

2. What do I do that I need to do better?

3. What do I do that I should not be doing

4. What should I be doing that I am not doing?

5. Other comments:

Lesson Analysis and Conference Planning Form

Teacher _____ Date _____
Observer _____ School _____
Subject/Grade _____

1. Observed objective (in behavioral terms):

2. Appropriate for learners? _____ Yes _____ No
   _____ For Some _____ Unable to determine

3. Achieved by learners? _____ All _____ Most
   _____ Some _____ None _____ Unable to determine

4. Teaching strategies that promoted learning:

5. Teaching strategies that were omitted or interfered with learning:

6. Conference objectives. By the end of the conference, the teacher will:
   Objective for growth:
   Objective for reinforcement:

7. Focus for the conference:

8. Post conference analysis check. Objectives met? ____ Yes ____ No
Comments:

9. Suggested Follow-up:
_____
_____
_____

Purpose: _____
Class/Subject: _____
Time: _____

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